



HUNTING FOR A HIT

Guy Pearce has come a long way since *Neighbours*. With three major films under his belt and the lead in the stage revival of *Grease*, young Guy is on a role.

In his latest film, *Hunting*, he plays a hit-man, and can also be seen in next month's video release, *Heaven Tonight*.

The actor/singer talked to Paul Fischer.

On the set of Heaven Tonight (right) with John Waters and Rebecca Gilling



When Guy Pearce looks back on his career from his heart-throb days on TV's *Neighbours*, he is very much aware of how he has developed as an actor. "I think there has to be a certain amount of progression, because one matures and one grows up anyway. I also believe that you become aware of yourself being able to watch yourself on the screen." It was film producer Frank Howson who saw Pearce's potential and cast him in three films, virtually back to back: *Heaven Tonight*, *Hunting* and *Flynn*, so it stands to reason that Howson is considered something of a mentor to the actor. "Frank's been fabulous towards me as far as letting me be quite open as an actor. The thing that I find difficult is, that if I work with a director who's rude or difficult, I'm not going to open up and I'm not going to do my best creatively. If I don't spark off a reasonable relationship with somebody, then I just clam up; I just do what they ask me to do and that's it. And Frank's fantastic in that he lets me try things for myself."

In the film *Hunting*, which is being theatrically released next month, Pearce plays a hit-man for a high powered financier, played by American actor John Savage. Pearce may not be in the film for long, but he still had enormous fun playing a killer and someone far removed from his usual persona. "I loved doing it, because it was quite different from what I had done before. When you do something and you get stuck in a rut, when you want to try something different, you really make a huge effort and go for it." What sets *Hunting* apart in his mind is its surrealism feel; its unique imagery. "The whole film is quite surreal in a certain way with the music and images, and I just wanted to create a certain magic with it. It can be a real story, but when you watch the film it's quite bizarre. I just wanted to add to that. I wanted to go a little over the top and make it a little more interesting and fascinating." He describes his character as being "as unapproachable and indescribable as possible. I didn't want to be too nasty in it or too violent; I just wanted to exist and be there."

The reverse can be said for his other film role in *Heaven Tonight*, which Pearce actually shot about three years ago. In that film he plays an aspiring rock 'n' roller on the way up, while his father, an ex-rock star of the sixties, copes with his own failures. In the film, Pearce utilised both his musical and acting talents, and admits that it was not only a very satisfying experience, but a straightforward one to boot. "It was fairly standard, I guess, in that I played a nice, eighteen year old guy who's into music and rock 'n' roll, which I am a bit. So because I relate to it a fair bit, I kind of cruised in there, did it and cruised out again." It was the easiest character he's yet had to play, because of the similarity between actor and character. "He was a fairly clear-cut character. He was a kid who was mixed up, because his dad was in rock 'n' roll. He wanted to be in rock 'n' roll too, but couldn't see the pressures that his father was under and I found that quite obvious." Is he pleased with the film? "Yeah I am. It's difficult now because I did it three years ago, so I obviously look back at it and think I could do some things better. But that's all part of being an actor, so that's fine."

Not one to rest on his laurels, Pearce will next hit the big screen playing the young Errol Flynn in the big-budget movie *Flynn*, which is finally due out next year. Meanwhile, He is treading the boards and in John Travolta's shoes in the stage revival of *Grease* which premieres in Sydney later this month. Beyond that, Guy wants to develop his musical career and hopes "to some day record an album of my own music." *Paul Fischer*

Hunting opens theatrically in Sydney and Melbourne on October 17. *Heaven Tonight* is available on video next month.

Flynn is expected to be released theatrically in April 1992. *Grease* premieres at Sydney's Footbridge Theatre this month and is expected to run until early 1992 before embarking on a national tour.